

## From the DASAF Mission Preparation

While many Soldiers understand and already execute what I'm about to share, I offer these thoughts to help you enhance your existing practices and assist you in refining your thoughts and how you do business.

During the course of duty performance, there will be times you'll have a habitual opportunity to fight from or transport in Army aircraft. The great crews that transport our Soldiers are dedicated Warriors with an intense desire to achieve mission success. Our crews are mission focused and strive for "Mission Accomplishment." However, I suggest you'll want to establish mutually understood and agreed to criteria for risk acceptance prior to wheels rolling or breaking friction with the ground.

Let me explain. In aviation (or any other functional area), crew coordination doesn't begin when an aircrew straps on an aircraft and fires up the engines. Effective aircrew coordination begins with mission receipt, planning, and with the mission briefing. That's when everybody who has a stake in the successful accomplishment of the mission discusses what has to be done, when it has to be done, and why it has to be done. It is during the mission brief when all crewmembers determine what is expected of them during each phase of flight and during contingencies.


Here is where you enter the picture. Crewmembers aren't the only ones onboard or the only ones with a "stake" in mission success. As a member of the crew (or habitual passenger), you have an obligation to ensure there exists a clear understanding of "acceptable risk." The understanding of mission urgency and acceptable risk must be discussed. All personnel should clearly address and define, prior to mission initiation, what "acceptable risks" exist (such as weather, enemy or other contingencies). It is in everyone's best interest to establish the exact criteria for mission continuation prior to encountering a threat (weather, IEDs, SAFARE, obstacles, etc.) before tension and stress surface.

The human side of accident equations is our single largest problem area, and the one area where we lose the most Soldiers. Coincidentally, in this human factor is where we stand to make the greatest advances in accident reduction. One major way of dealing with human performance or human error is to improve how our Soldiers interface, work and communicate with each other. All too often, someone knew, or had that "gut" feeling, that something was wrong before an accident sequence began. Or even worse, the habitual passenger had "no idea" of what was happening and was merely "along for the ride."

Since all personnel on board have a stake in mission accomplishment, there should be a conscious decision before mission initiation to continue the mission into an area where either the personnel or passengers are uncomfortable or unaware. The best communication and most effective coordination are absolutely essential if our Army aircrews, teams, squads, platoons, etc. are to complete their demanding missions safely and effectively. But that effective communication starts in the "crew brief" where calm prevails, not when the threat appears and stress enters the equation.

Effective operations dictate we function as a team. Just prior to an impending disaster is no time to decide what game plan we'll execute.

***Leading on the Edge!***



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Commanding

